

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 (Canceled).

21. (New) Folding machine for folding a web material along transverse folding lines comprising at least one folding cylinder equipped with at least one gripping member to grasp the web material along a folding line, wherein an electrostatic system is associated with said at least one gripping member to attract the web material towards said gripping member.

22. (New) Machine as claimed in claim 21, further comprising a system to electrostatically charge the web material before the web material reaches said gripping member.

23. (New) Machine as claimed in claim 21, wherein two folding cylinders having parallel axes are present in counter-rotating relation to each other, each of said two folding cylinders being equipped with a gripping member of said at least one gripping member with said electrostatic system.

24. (New) Machine according to claim 22, wherein two folding cylinders having parallel axes are present in counter-rotating relation to each other, each of said two folding cylinders being equipped with a gripping member

of said at least one gripping member with said electrostatic system.

25. (New) Folding machine as claimed in claim 21, wherein said at least one gripping member comprises a movable element cooperating with a first stop, the web material being electrostatically attracted between said movable element and said first stop.

26. (New) Folding machine as claimed in claim 25, wherein said first stop is held at an electrostatic potential of an opposite sign with respect to an electrostatic potential of said web material.

27. (New) Folding machine as claimed in claim 26, wherein said movable element cooperates with a second stop, said first stop and said second stop defining a slot essentially parallel to an axis of rotation of a respective one of said at least one folding cylinder, the movable element extending into said slot.

28. (New) Folding machine as claimed in one of claims 21 to 24, wherein each of said at least one folding cylinder includes at least one cavity essentially parallel to an axis of rotation of said cylinder and opens onto a cylindrical surface of the folding cylinder, inside which a respective one of said at least one gripping member is housed, and wherein at least one retaining member, kept at an

electrostatic potential to cause attraction of the web material, is housed in said cavity.

29. (New) Folding machine as claimed in claim 28, wherein a first block defining said first stop is fixed in said cavity.

30. (New) Folding machine as claimed in claim 28, wherein a second block defining said second stop is fixed in said cavity.

31. (New) Folding machine as claimed in one of claims 21 to 24, wherein each of said at least one gripping member includes an elastic plate.

32. (New) Folding machine as claimed in one of claims 21 to 24, further comprising a cutting unit associated with said at least one folding cylinder to cut the web material into individual sheets, which are folded by said at least one folding cylinder.

33. (New) Folding machine as claimed in claim 32, wherein said cutting unit comprises two cylinders with axes parallel to each other and to a respective one of the at least one folding cylinder, said two cylinders being counter-rotating and defining therebetween a nip through which the web material passes, and said two cylinders being equipped with blades and counter-blades to cut the web material, and wherein one of said two cylinders forming the

cutting unit form together with the at least one folding cylinder a nip through which the cut web material passes.

34. (New) Folding machine as claimed in one of claims 21 to 24, wherein said at least one folding cylinder cooperates with a counter-cylinder, on which a boss is provided, extending parallel to the axis of said at least one cylinder, the boss being phased with respect to the at least one gripping member to facilitate folding of said web material.

35. (New) Folding machine as claimed in claim 32, wherein provided on each of said at least one folding cylinder is a corresponding boss, each said corresponding boss of one of said at least one folding cylinder cooperating with a respective one of said at least one gripping member of an opposite folding cylinder.

36. (New) Folding machine as claimed in claim 34, wherein provided on each of said at least one folding cylinder is a corresponding boss, each said corresponding boss of one of said at least one folding cylinder cooperating with a respective one of said at least one gripping member of an opposite folding cylinder.

37. (New) A method for folding a web material according to transverse folding lines, comprising:

– arranging at least one folding cylinder;
– providing on said folding cylinder at least one gripping member;
– rotating said folding cylinder about an axis thereof;
– feeding the web material to said folding cylinder;
– engaging the web material with said at least one gripping member of said folding cylinder;
wherein the web material is inserted into said gripping member by electrostatic attraction.

38. (New) Method as claimed in claim 37, further comprising: arranging two of said at least one folding cylinder with parallel axes in counter-rotating relationship and defining a nip through which the web material is made to pass, each of said at least one folding cylinder being equipped with said at least one gripping member; and engaging the web material alternately with a respective one of said at least one gripping member of a first one of said at least one folding cylinder and with a respective one of said at least one gripping member of a second one of said at least one folding cylinder, to fold said web material with a zigzag configuration.

39. (New) Method as claimed in claim 37 or 38, wherein the web material is gripped between a stop fixed

with respect to a respective one of said at least one folding cylinder and a movable element.

40. (New) Method as claimed in claim 37 or 38, wherein folding is facilitated in said web material in front of said at least one gripping member.

41. (New) Method as claimed in claim 40, wherein folding is facilitated by a boss provided on a cylinder positioned opposite said at least one folding cylinder.

42. (New) Method as claimed in claim 41, wherein said at least one gripping member does not cooperate mechanically with said boss.